

TRAM NGUYEN

**Domestication of global higher education policies: Legitimizing
narratives in advocating student mobility in Finland and Vietnam**

University of Tampere

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ABSTRACT

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The spread of global higher education policies has recently drawn much attention from scholars in social sciences. Much research conducted on this topic refers to the ritual enactment of world culture as the account for the diffusion of global higher education policies, that is research based on the world society theory perspective. However, the existing research fails to explain how such global policy models become domesticated as part of national higher education policies. It also leaves the important role of local actors with little attention. The intention of this thesis is to fulfill these limitations by approaching the topic from a different angle and that is from the domestication theory perspective.

The thesis is organized as a case study, which examines how a global policy idea became part of national higher education policy two countries Finland and Vietnam through the review and analysis of government documents. The central research questions posed in this thesis are: How is student mobility advocated in Finnish and Vietnamese higher education policy debates? What are the different justifications used when actors promote student mobility as a domestic higher education policy objective? Are there differences in the justifications used? If so, what is the explanation for these differences? These questions are answered by applying the notion of discourse by Michel Foucault and the theory of rhetoric by Chaïm Perelman to identify different justifications used in governmental documents to advocate a global policy idea in the two local contexts. These justifications are referred as “legitimizing narratives” to illustrate stories or imaginaries which are used by local actors to justify a proposed policy model.

The findings of the thesis indicate various justifications or legitimizing narratives which Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers have used to advocate student mobility as part of their national higher education policies. Further the findings indicate there are not only commonalities but also differences in the justifications identified. It is also seen from the study that whilst the global education policy idea of student mobility does not originate from either of the two countries in question, it disperses through the nations with justifications directly linked to national interests and gradually develops into a domestic matter. In addition, the findings reveal that local policymakers within both countries, Finland and Vietnam, make use of justifications which are widely shared and accepted within their local societies to advocate student mobility as part of their national higher education policy. This strengthens the domestication theory viewpoint that countries do not construct themselves as imitators. Rather, local policy actors in the domestication process build their justifications for the adoption of global policy models so that they are not be seen to merely imitate what other countries have done.

In general, the study has contributed to current discussion about the adoption of global higher education policies and complemented the domestication theory in terms of national higher education policy making. However, future research is recommended with focus on global policies in other fields and different sources of data to discover more comprehensive findings, which will further complement the domestication theory.

Keywords: domestication, student mobility, global higher education policies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CIMO	Centre for International Mobility
EU	European Union
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
IOs	International Organizations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WB	World Bank

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 World-wide Spread of Student Mobility

The current time of globalization has witnessed the global policy trends where countries all over the world conform to the same policies in many fields. Among them, the policy in education, which is globalization of higher education, appearing as a national policy of many countries worldwide regardless of their location or development status has drawn much attention from scholars in social sciences. According to Jane Knight (2003), globalization of higher education, also known as internationalization of higher education, refers to “the process of integrating of international, intercultural or global dimension into purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (p. 2). This concept integrates many different activities such as student mobility, research collaboration and curricula aspects. In this study, I particularly focus on student mobility and how student mobility as a global policy model has become part of domestic higher education policies.

The term student mobility refers to international students who are taking a full degree abroad or students who are participating in a short-term program abroad i.e. a semester or a year (Knight, 2012). Student mobility may consist of not only coursework but also fieldwork such as internships and apprenticeships particularly for senior students. When mentioning student mobility as a policy objective, nation states emphasize both attracting foreign students and advocating local students to study overseas. This objective usually goes along with specific target numbers of inward and outward students to be achieved.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD (2017), students have become more mobile in higher education levels. The opportunity to study overseas has been identified as a key experience for young people when enrolling in higher education. Thus, student mobility has drawn much attention in terms of policies. Studying overseas is seen as an excellent opportunity to gain access to quality education in addition to gaining skills which may not be readily available in home countries. It is also seen as a way of addressing international labor markets, in helping improve employability. In addition, the broadening of knowledge and the strengthening language skills are motives for studying abroad.

For host countries, student mobility may be seen as a significant source of income given that international students usually pay for their tuition fees. In addition, they contribute to their host countries' economies through their living expenses such as food and accommodation. According to the Institute of International Education (2016), the US economy benefited more than USD 35 billion from international students. Furthermore, in the long term, highly educated international students may possibly enter local markets thus contributing significantly to knowledge innovation as well as economic growth. Therefore, attracting international students is a good way to make use of a global pool of talents, support innovation development and reduce risks of lacking future skills (OECD, 2016).

In regards to the countries of origin, as long as mobile students return home after studying, they will be able to contribute greatly to their home countries with the knowledge and skills acquired abroad. In addition, these students are able to act as a link to connect their home countries with global networks through their tacit knowledge and international interactions. According to Appelt, van Beuzekom, Galindo-Rueda and de Pinho (2015), student mobility is also considered as a predictor of future scientist flows since it shapes international scientific cooperation networks.

Given the tremendous benefits which student mobility can bring to both host and home countries, educational institutions worldwide try to get access to the pool of potential students to increase their reputation as well as revenues (OECD, 2012). There have been more and more changes created by institutions as part of the internationalization strategy such as double degrees, online courses, revised curricula, teaching in English languages and international internships. These changes indicate the fact that international activities within higher education institutions have been not only expanding but also complex.

There has been an explosion in the number of foreign students enrolled in higher education throughout the world. According to UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2014), there were more than four million students studying in higher education institutions in foreign countries in 2012, which is double the number of the year 2000. A similar finding has been made by the OECD; in its annual report "Education at a Glance" from 2015 (OECD, 2015), which stated that there is an ongoing rise in international student mobility.

The rise of students studying abroad is also described clearly in the OECD (2017) as shown in the Figure 1. It can be seen from the chart that the number of foreign students enrolled worldwide increased from 0.8 millions in 1975 to 4.6 millions in 2015.

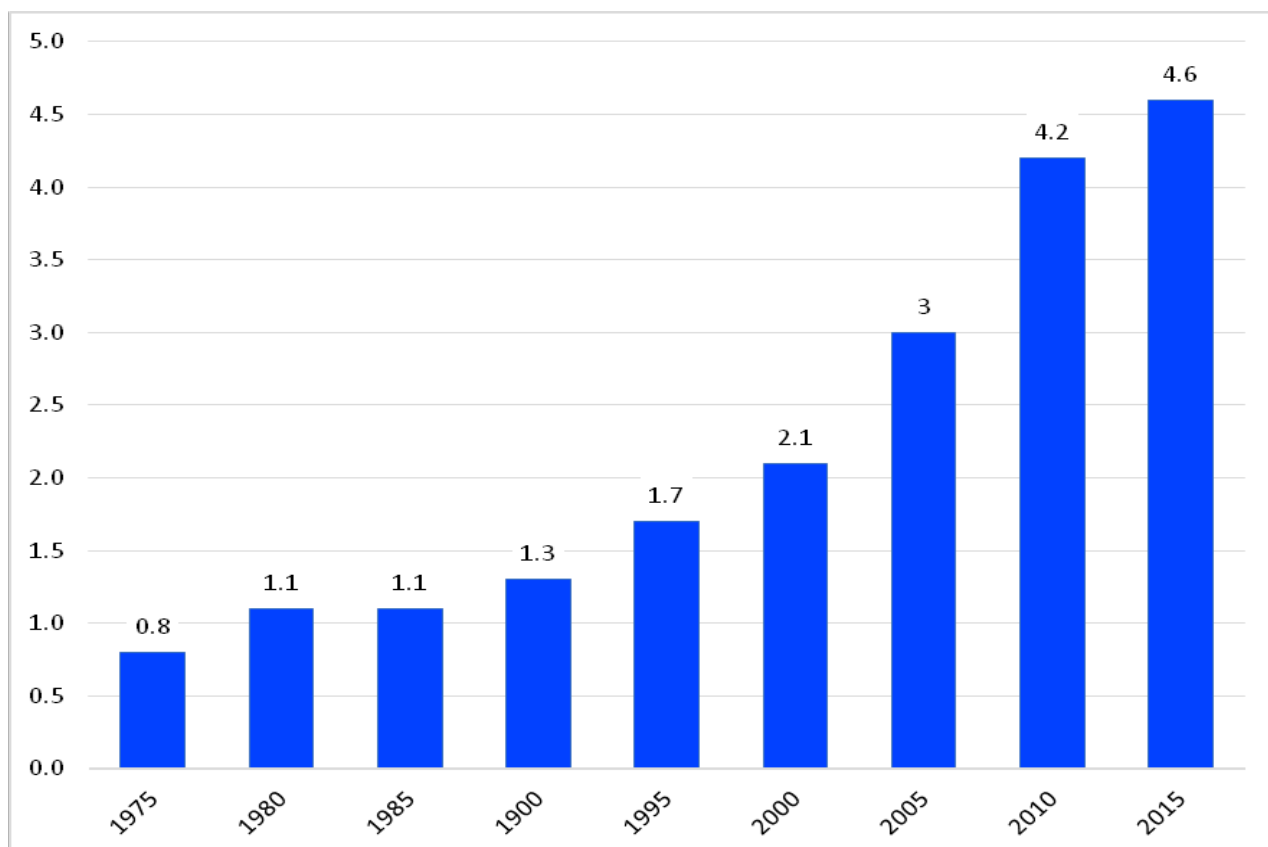


Figure 1. Number of foreign students enrolled in higher education worldwide, 1975-2015 (in millions) (OECD, 2017).

This exponential increase indicates an obvious trend that the policy model of student mobility has been adopted by countries around the world. However, my focus in this global policy model, is not in relation to its outcome in terms of global spread but rather on how and why this student mobility idea has been taken up and become accepted by countries worldwide. More precisely, the aim of my research is to explore how a global policy model, in this instance student mobility, is advocated at a nation-state level thus becoming part of domestic higher education policies. As contexts for my research I have selected and focused on the countries of Finland and Vietnam

In Finland, the globalization of higher education has been one of the central goals of educational policy. Within this student mobility is seen to be a key element in the globalization process. Hence, the Ministry of Education has set objectives for student mobility since the beginning of the globalization discussion. Furthermore, the Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009-2015 has been developed as a result of the government's program. The strategy emphasizes that student mobility needs to be increased further in the future. In addition, a national government agency- Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), an agency of the Finnish

Ministry of Education and Culture was established in 1991 to promote the globalization of Finnish higher education through services to assist the progress of mobility and international cooperation. CIMO facilitates exchange programs and promotes Finnish language and culture, with an aim to increase the image of Finnish education.

In Vietnam, the significant contribution of higher education to economic reform has been recognized by the government since early 1990s. Accordingly, the government has made a huge effort to reform the Vietnamese higher education system. The objective to increase the number of both inbound and outbound students is mentioned in most of Vietnamese government documents related to education. In particular, the Strategy for Education Development 2011-2020 emphasizes the support for and encouragement of Vietnamese students to study abroad as well as aims to increase the number international students in Vietnam. Recently at the SHARE dialogue- the platform to discuss how to enhance student mobility in the ASEAN region, initiated by the European Union (EU) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Vietnamese Education and Training Deputy Minister highlighted that Vietnam looks to boost student mobility.

Finland and Vietnam are in many ways quite different. Yet interestingly, both countries' higher education policies develop, at least in part, along quite similar lines. As an example, both countries invoke student mobility as one of the key objectives of their higher education policies. While Finland is a developed country with its education system surpassing most of the world, Vietnam is a developing country where 40 years of war has just ended with a poor education system. How is it possible that two countries with many differences: cultures, traditions, development status and the like end up implementing the same policy objective? This is the question that motivates my study. I specifically ask: How has student mobility become part of and been domesticated into Finnish and Vietnamese higher education policy and discourse? In particular, I ask, how is student mobility advocated as a policy objective in Finnish and Vietnamese higher education policy debates? What are the justifications or "legitimizing narratives" used when student mobility is advocated in these two nation-state contexts?

1.2 Origin of Student Mobility

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2014), mobile students are those who physically cross over the national borders with the aim to take part in educational activities in foreign countries. The phenomenon of mobility originates from the beginning of the very first universities.

According to Neubauer and Kuroda (2012), the notion of student mobility was conventionally perceived that universities were founded upon universalism. In particular, universities were considered to be universal and not restricted by states. Instead, they should be accessible to people from all walks of life despite their backgrounds. This point of view had its origin in the history of higher education in the Middle Ages including the universities of Oxford, Paris and Bologna, all of which were built prior to modern states. These universities were open to students from various nations and taught in a common language, which was Latin. Interestingly, more than half of students were foreigners (Kitamura, 1984). During that time, international figures and Christians were prestigious teachers at those universities. They gave their teachings on popular topics in the Latin language with standard curriculum and tests. In this way, they ensured that these studies were recognized in the worldwide Christian community. After finishing their studies, students returned to their countries of origin with new found knowledge, experiences and opinions acquired during their time at these universities, which could then be incorporated and applied to crucial positions occupied by these same students in their home countries (Gacel-Avila, 2000).

However, these universities with their freedom from borders did not last long, as nation states characteristics became clearer (Kuroda, 2012). Hence, they were demanded and later compelled to support the combination of both general public and policy objectives. Universal universities had gradually evolved into ones with national features, which happened simultaneously with the establishment of nation states (Kuroda, 2012). Consequently, there appeared the disagreement between the two forms: universalism and nationalism. On the one hand, in the respect of universalism, accepting students from various countries, was the ground for improving international student mobility. On the other hand, from the perspective of nationalism, sending local students overseas for training and study was seen as a tremendous benefit for national development. This perspective however did not pay attention to the demand for foreign students. Nevertheless, Ebuchi (1997) claims that when nation states developed, they recognized the advantage of the universal nature of universities with the attendance of foreign students. This was considered helpful for science and technology development, in turn leading to the enhancement of national reputation. Given the benefits of both universalism and nationalism, nation states consequently pursued the combination of these two forms with the aim of internationalization.

During the post-war European integration, when Europe shifted from conflict to cooperation, the role of universities began to be noticed. Student mobility has been promoted in Europe since the 1980s. In particular, the ERASMUS program was established by the European Commission in 1987 to advocate higher education exchanges in the region. Moreover, this program has been seen as one

of the most important educational programs managed by the European Union (Teichler, 2004). It is widely shared that ERAMUS has boosted the dispersion of the student mobility idea in the European region.

However, the student mobility idea has not only become popular in Europe, it has also spread to Asia. There are a large number of universities in East Asia, which have matured in connection with nation states. According to Neubauer and Kuroda (2012), the fact that universities in Malaysia, Myanmar and Taipei accept inbound students from other British colonies is seen as an exception. This has never happened previously in any higher education institutions in the region. East Asian region mostly sent their local students to the West for training in the post-war period. Furthermore, student mobility in Asia was inactive until the 1980s. Yet, from this time on, the expansion of higher education and the rapid economic growth in East Asia have impacted on both the model of universities as well as student mobility. Consequently, the notion of advocating exchanges and receiving foreign students has been intensified (Neubauer & Kuroda, 2012). In this sense, universities in East Asia are the center of knowledge intensive activities, in turn making universities an integral part of national development strategies.

In addition, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) commenced advocating regional integration in the 1990s after the Cold War. The ASEAN University Network was established in 1992, with the result that universities and the student mobility idea became recognized in the region. Furthermore, in the following year, ASEAN created the University Mobility and Pacific Program to encourage studying overseas. These are clear examples to indicate that efforts for student mobility have come into existence.

Today, at the time of globalization, student mobility has become more and more essential since it is a requirement of nation states to train their workforce. Yet, student mobility is challenging since it has not been considered as a tool, but rather a potential to better higher education. It provides opportunities to improve the higher education system, in turn leading to a better position globally. In this way, university students and prospective professionals can compete in the international market.

1.3 Earlier Literature on Globalization of Higher Education

1.3.1 World Society Theory and the Diffusion of Global Higher Education Policies

The reason as to why nation states adopt similar policies has been explained by the existent of a common world culture spreading through these nation states (Boli, 2005). Research based on the world society theory has particularly pursued this view, stressing that the remarkable similarities found between nation states' policies is due to world culture, which has led to nation states and individual actors tending to imitate each other. In other words, the world society theory describes the world in terms of the enactment of world culture which forms nation states, organizations, individual citizenship and identity as illustrated in the Figure 2 below.

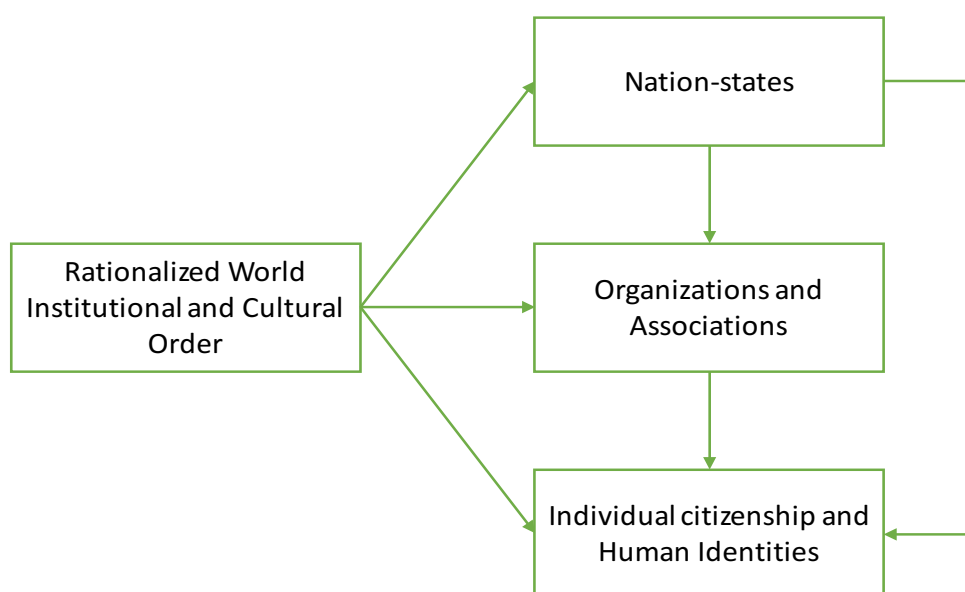


Figure 2. The Enactment of World Culture (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997).

The above figure depicts the enactment process in the world. More specifically, it presents that nation states are to a large extent constructed by exogenous entities. Furthermore, according to Meyer, Boli, Thomas and Ramirez (1997), individuals inside and outside the states involved in state and policy formation are not self-directed actors, but rather they are enactors of scripts. The crucial

consequence of this understanding is that the action of individuals as well as organizations can be influenced by institutionalized models irrespective of policies adopted by nation states.

According to world society theory, culture in this context is not simply values to interpret behavior or decisions. Rather it is a complicated group of beliefs and rules that lead to the creation of nation states, organizations and individual identities (Meyer et al. 1997). In this sense, world culture is understood as globally expanding appropriateness, broadening consensus on what the appropriate actors, objectives, and modes of action are (Simmons, Dobbin, & Garrett, 2007). Hence, nation-states are similar not only in how they are organized but also in how they change in various aspects (Meyer et al., 1997).

The world society theory asserts, despite significant differences in socioeconomic conditions and cultures, nation-states still adopt similar policies (Meyer, 2010). Even though there is no official authority, which gives orders or forces nation states to adopt similar policies, they adopt those policies on a voluntary basis resulting in isomorphism. Particularly, while countries all over the world have very different cultures and belief systems, they still share the understanding of national development and their responsibilities for justice and equality. A world society which exists prior to nation states may be an explanation for this situation (Meyer et al., 1997).

According to world society theorists, organizations usually adopt a new institutional practice to strengthen their legitimacy without thinking much about efficiency. Furthermore, world society theorists claim that institutional isomorphism and expansion of all kinds of common models, including policy fashions and organizational models are central features of the contemporary world society. What actually diffuses throughout the world, according to this view, is the logic of appropriateness (Simmons, Dobbin, & Garrett, 2008). World culture consists of shared understanding regarding what is appropriate, and it thereby guides policymaking towards isomorphism among national states. World culture therefore defines “appropriate” actors, the aims of policymaking, and the means of reaching those aims.

By stressing that isomorphism between national states is due to culture rather than social or technological determinism, world society theorists distance themselves from rational choice theory which claims that social phenomena may be interpreted in respect of individual actions undertaken to maximize individual aims (Scott, 2000). This often leads into irrationality where governments adopt policies but fail to comply with them, resulting in decoupling (Hafner-Burton & Tsutsui, 2005).

In relation to the diffusion of global higher education policies, world society theory builds consistent accounts by referring to a national enactment of worldwide models (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, & Schofer, 2007). World society theory argues that the wider expansion of higher education has played a crucial part in modern society in that higher education carries rationalized models which impact the area of education and others (Meyer et al., 2007). These emerging global models of higher education have impacted multiple aspects such as enrolment requirements, curricula, and organization in a variety range of countries (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). These models indicated widely shared desires and standards for education, which were expressed via world institutions (Meyer, Ramirez, Robinson, & Boli-Bennett, 1977). Furthermore, the expansion of higher education was proposedly explained by the enactment of nation states (Ramirez, 2006).

In particular, according to Meyer, Ramirez and Soysal (1992), early work based on the world society theory examined the global expansion of mass education with the effort to explain some deviations in the field of education. The fact remained that education expansion happened all over the world in regardless of countries' status of social and economic development. Moreover, this expansion carried a high level of isomorphism as regards enrolment, curricula and the organization of education. It was unexpected that this expansion which occurred in diverse social and economic conditions of nation-states had similarity in form (Jepperson, 2002). The assumption had been that educational content and management systems would be diverse reflecting the diverse conditions of nation states. As a result of these findings, it became evident that education was formed for a commonly imagined society. This understanding would correspond to institutional thoughts surrounding those people who enacted the models of education. Thus, these models in the imagined society were expressed by world institutions (Meyer et al., 1977).

There has been further study on this viewpoint. According to Ramirez (2006), the enactment of nation states was suggested as explanation for education expansion. A nation state entailed rationalized models of a nation's statehood. Specifically, there were models highlighting the necessity and importance of education not only in nation building but also individual improvement. The increase of these models resulted in the expansion and standardization of education systems. Whilst the models were in the first instance diffused from the core countries to peripheral countries, international organizations and associations have more recently facilitated this diffusion. A significant finding in the study of Meyer, Ramirez and Soysal in 1992 was that education systems of countries with connections to these international groups are more likely to conform to such world models.

Generally, world society theory claims that actions of nation states and domestic actors in almost every field, including education, are shaped and legitimized by cultural models. These institutionalized models are helpful in explaining isomorphism in the structure of social domains regardless of differences in preferences, resources and practices. World society theory states that an emerging rationalized world culture causes changes in higher education globally. This culture strengthens the opportunity for socio-economic development and human rights. The spread of mass schooling, including higher education, is considered as one of the most important means to achieve these outcomes. In other words, education is not the outcome of socio-economic progress rather, it is seen as a main source of such progress (Meyer et al., 2007).

According to Schofer and Meyer (2005), there is some dissension as regards the reason for the expansion of higher education, that it is not the result of economic growth, but rather is caused by a change in world culture where the idea of education is considered as a cause of human capital development. In previous periods, there were critical concerns in relation to the over expansion of higher education such as “the diploma disease” and the “overeducated American” (Dore, 1976). These thoughts were based on a perception that higher education had a restricted role and should be contained within nation-states. However, the shift to individual development and human rights resulted in the concept of limitless capacity of human beings and their rights to strengthen that competence (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). In addition, scientization increased the relevance and utility of higher education for both individuals and organizations. In the post-war era, nation-states increasingly focused on socio-economic growth considering higher education as a resource to accomplish such progress. That is to say education systems would not be the reaction of economic development, but rather the source of it. In this sense, the reason behind education was no longer seen as simply training towards fixed roles in society, rather, education was considered to be a human, social, cultural, and economic resource. Hence, educational expansion gained the greatest legitimacy in respect of individual as well as organizational benefit (Schofer & Meyer, 2005).

In general, higher education expansion turned into part of a worldwide model and the notion of over-education was eliminated as a result of combining rationalized world cultures and the actorhood of nation states and individuals (Schofer & Meyer, 2005).

1.3.2 The Role of International Organizations in Spreading Higher Education Policies

The key to the diffusion of worldwide models according to world society theory is the impact of international organizations (Boli & Thomas, 1999), which policymakers often promote in their roles and identities as national citizens and members of transnational communities. These organizations are seen as helping to diffuse the global models that are ritually enacted by nation-states. Consequently, world society theorists argue that the scripts, including world culture, crystallized in the concept of the modern formal organization, spread throughout the world, arranging organizations and nation-states accordingly so that all entities eventually look the same (Meyer et al., 1997).

World society theory claims that international organizations take a significant part in maintaining and spreading a common culture across countries all over the world, contributing to policy diffusion (Boli & Thomas, 1999). Due to the fact that nation states have not been active in some aspects of world development, international organizations instruct states on what they should do in turn shaping their agenda and behavior (Finnemore, 1993). Whilst these international organizations do not have authority to either compel nation states to take action or to comply with norms, over time world cultures and the norms which international organizations promote have a major effect on individual nation states' behaviors.

As regards higher education policies, it is argued that international organizations disperse world cultures within the higher education area. Published policies and discourses of these bodies are considered the primary tools influencing the formation of ideas in higher education domain (Boli & Thomas, 1997). World society theory states that changes in higher education globally are caused by emerging rationalized world culture, which are carried and promoted by international organizations (Boli & Thomas, 1997). In addition, Doyle (2014) in his research on the development of Irish higher education based on world society theory, also states that changes in higher education policy is permeated by ideas carried by international organizations. According to Doyle's work (2014), the Irish state and its higher education institutes are increasingly exposed to global policy ideas through the intensive contact with international organizations such as the EU and the OECD. This consequently has led Ireland to the adoption of policy ideas established in the EU and the OECD.

The role of international organizations in spreading higher education policies has been also acknowledged outside of the world society theory. Many scholars acknowledge the increasingly globalizing role of international organizations in the internationalization of higher education

policies. As an example, Vaira (2004) argues that international bodies encourage nation states to incorporate global ideas or models in their national policies. Given the global competitive pressures, nation states adopt global ideas as part of their higher education policies and thereby put strains on their local higher education sector. In a similar vein, King (2009) claims that nation states feel institutional pressures as a consequence of membership to international organizations which urge compliance and policy adoption by their member states. Yang (2010) strengthens this claim in his work of exploring Chinese higher education policies. His work reflects on the World Bank's ideas towards higher education which includes adjusting on a large scale by policy making, giving more autonomy to higher education organizations in terms of admissions and enrolments and enhancing efficiency by merging higher education institutions. The similarities found between the Chinese higher education policies and the World Bank's ideas indicate the strong impact of the World Bank on Chinese higher education (Yang, 2010).

In addition, Rizvi and Lingard (2009) claim that when countries join international organizations, their local policy actors increase the network with their counterparts in other countries. Consequently, policy makers in one country tend to refer to others when adopting a global policy idea in their country. In the same manner, Shahjahan (2012) emphasizes the pivotal role of international organizations in initiating a global higher education policy process by examining the relationship between the four international bodies including the World Bank, the UNESCO, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the European Union and higher education policies. Shahjahan (2012) argues that international organizations play an essential function in promoting the spread of higher education policies specifically as regards the formation of and the explanation for these policies within a variety of circumstances and environments. These international organizations not only facilitate global networking but also provide resources to assure the implementation of global higher education policies in nation states.

1.4 Limitations of the Existing Research

While world society theory as part of diffusion literature has been able to satisfactorily justify the global isomorphism in higher education policies, i.e. under which conditions the diffusion of higher education policies takes place, the theory yet fails to explain how and through which mechanisms such models become part of national higher education policies and practices. Instead, the theory claims, local actors are passive, unthinking conformists who ritually enact global scripts, resulting in a situation where the same policy ideas are spread across the world. Therefore, whilst world

society theory is able to support the outcome that global policy ideas do eventually become accepted at a national policy debate level, it is unable to show how this occurs. In addition, world society theory explains the spread of global higher education policies by claiming the crucial role of international organizations in the processes in which global policy ideas are diffused. The more embedded a nation-state is in world society and the stronger membership ties a nation state has with international organizations, the readier a nation-state adopts global policy ideas promoted by these international organizations (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992). While the role of international organizations in spreading global higher education policies is acknowledged, world society theory seems to largely ignore the significant role of local actors. On one hand, I acknowledge that world society scholars do adequately account for worldwide spread of higher education policies by using world culture and international organizations as carriers of this world culture. On the other hand, I argue that the explanation for the spread of higher education policies should include the involvement of local actors. It is these local actors who directly deal with the exogenous ideas and are responsible for these global ideas being successfully accepted and implemented in their local contexts.

1.5 The Aim of The Study

Given the shortcomings of existing literature, my study intends to fulfill the gaps by researching from the perspective of the domestication framework which stresses the role of local actors in adopting global policy ideas. To reiterate, by local actors I refer here to local policymakers or political elites who are in the position to negotiate policy reform in the local contexts. In my research, I argue that the rationale for isomorphism is not merely that which world society theorists assume. Whilst world society theory claims world culture and international organizations play a crucial role in explaining the similarity in national policymaking, it still leaves some questions regarding the phenomenon of global policy diffusion unanswered.

What actually takes place in nation-state context to get to a certain policy outcome? How local policymakers end up with their decision on a policy outcome? Are nation-states truly conformists or imitators? Do nation-states have justifications for their actions? These questions challenge world society theory. They indicate the fact that what really happens within the nation-state is still a black box to world society theorists. I argue that what occurs at a local level should be included in the investigation and analysis of the acceptance of global policy ideas, as national level is where the

policy idea is finally made and implemented. Findings from analysis at local level will contribute to a comprehensive view of the dispersion of global policies.

To investigate how global policy ideas, specifically student mobility, becomes part of national higher education policy, my study draws on the domestication framework developed by Alasuutari and Qadir (2013). The domestication framework claims that a global policy idea becomes part of national policy discourse through a process at a local level. This process starts with the introduction of cross-national comparative data, then continues to a domestic field battle and concludes when actors accept a new status quo as a natural and national state of affairs. In my thesis I will focus on the domestication of “student mobility” in Finnish and Vietnamese higher education policy. In particular, I examine how student mobility has been invoked by local policy actors in their debates on the current and future status of national higher education system.

The empirical analysis presented in my thesis concentrates on relevant Finnish and Vietnamese government documents related to student mobility issued from the year 2001 to 2016. With this dataset for my empirical analysis, I examine how student mobility is advocated by local policymakers at a national policymaking level in discussions regarding the objectives of national higher education policies. In particular, my empirical investigation focuses on the justifications used by Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers to convince the general public that student mobility should be part of national higher education policy objectives. With this analysis of the ways in which student mobility is advocated at a national policymaking level, my aim is to show how global policy ideas, specifically those related to student mobility, become part of national higher education policy and discourse.

The central research questions posed in this thesis are the following: How is student mobility advocated in Finnish and Vietnamese higher education policy debates? What are the different justifications used when actors promote student mobility as domestic higher education policy objective? Are there differences in the justifications used? If so, how can these be explained? In order to answer these questions, I apply discourse and rhetorical analyses in the empirical analysis to identify the main justifications used to promote student mobility.

In my research, I refer to these justifications as “legitimizing narratives”. The term was first coined by Syväterä and Alasuutari (2013) in their research on exploring the actual justifications in the political process by which the national bioethics committees model was enacted in Finland. They conceive such justifications as legitimating narratives in the sense that these narratives provide policymakers possible stories or imaginaries which are used to justify the need for and the

promotion of a proposed reform. Their research eventually identifies three distinct legitimating narratives used to justify the establishment of a body equivalent to the National Bioethics Committees of other countries. In a similar manner, my research utilizes the term “legitimizing narratives” to identify justifications used by Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers to advocate student mobility. By identifying and understanding these justifications/legitimizing narratives, my research also reveals the basic premises these arguments are based on.

To analyze the justifications or legitimating narratives, as my empirical data, I use fourteen government documents which contain debates on student mobility at the nation-state level in two countries, Finland and Vietnam. These documents include decisions, resolutions and programs and were issued by the Finnish and Vietnamese Ministries of Education, the Finnish Prime Minister’s Office and The Research and Innovation Council of Finland. While my data is not able to cover all the discussions in relation to student mobility that have been taken place in Finland and Vietnam, it includes available documents in relation to student mobility officially issued by these governments from the year 2001 to 2016. Therefore, it provides adequate data for analysis and discussion to enable my study as to how student mobility is invoked in national higher education debate.

1.6 The Structure of The Paper

Chapter 2, following this introduction, outlines the domestication theory, which is the theoretical background that the study draws on. The text also discusses the benefits of this theoretical approach and how it is applied in this study.

Chapter 3 discusses the data and methodology. The study is a case study which examines how a global policy idea became part of national higher education policy in two countries, Finland and Vietnam, through the analysis of government documents. In particular, in an attempt to identify different justifications used in these documents to advocate a global policy idea within the two local contexts, the study takes advantage of discourse analysis and rhetorical analysis methods. In addition, the term “legitimizing narratives”- a tool in political reassurance work is introduced as reference to justifications identified.

Chapter 4 outlines the findings of the study. More specifically, this chapter presents the justifications or legitimating narratives which Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers have used to advocate student mobility as part of their national higher education policies. These narratives are organized in two categories. Common justifications used in both Finnish and Vietnamese nation-

state contexts are presented in shared narratives, while justifications used in the Finnish context only are presented in unique narratives. Furthermore, this paper attempts to identify and outline explanations for both the commonalities and the differences in the legitimating narratives found.

Chapter 5 discusses the general implications of the findings, limitations of the study and suggesting some options for future research.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by summarizing the main findings. It also briefly considers what this study contributes to the theories and literatures which it is a part of.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Domestication Framework

The most popular concept of domestication is referred to Silverstone (1994)'s work which describes the process of domesticating information and communication technologies (Haddon, 2007). This concept of domestication has been adopted by many scholars in various disciplines. Among them, Alasuutari (2009) used the term domestication when referring to the creation and harmonization of global trends. It involves a global model brought into a local environment and by way of consideration and discussion moving to a field battle which then sees it tamed to the local context. While the world society theory downplays the local processes by talking about decoupling of principles and actual practices (Meyer, 2004), the domestication framework highlights the local processes through which decisions regarding domestic policies are made.

Alasuutari and Qadir (2013, p.10) suggest that the domestication process of global policy trends in the context of nation-states is triggered by the introduction of a new idea or policy model by revealing information on similar ideas or models from other countries or by cross-national comparison. This then leads to the next phase of the process, the domestic political field battle, which is of a rhetorical nature, where local actors attempt to convince others by means of rational arguments relating to the new global idea or policy model (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2013, p.12). This stage of the domestication process is vital since it determines the direction of the policies in a nation-state. As a result of the battle field step in the process, a new global idea or policy model is either accepted or rejected in national policy discourses. In the end, people within that nation consider the new global idea or policy model as local as the complete process of domestication has enabled them to get used to that new global idea or policy model and forget its exogenous origin. This acceptance is identified as the final phase of the domestication process, naturalization as nationalization (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2013, p.13).

Through this process, the domestication framework emphasizes the function of domestic actors in the introduction of global policy ideas into local contexts. That is global ideas or policy models are not just simply enacted in national context; rather, they become gradually domesticated through debates among local actors. In addition, the domestication framework asserts that while nation-states initially use other countries and models which appear to work in those countries as references

in the first step of this framework, nation-states do not construct themselves as imitators. Instead, domestic policy actors in the domestication process present their justifications for the adoption of a policy so that in the end it does not seem to be an imitation of what other countries have already done (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2013, p.16).

2.2 Applying Domestication Framework in the Analysis of Advocating Student Mobility in National Higher Education Policies

The domestication approach is useful for this study as it opens up the actual processes through which global policy ideas become part of national policies and practices. I claim that the reason why individual nation-states adopt global policy models, such as student mobility, can be well described by applying the domestication theory.

In particular, many existing studies view the adoption of global higher education policy models from the perspective of the world society theory. They identify nation-states as imitators or conformists. In contrast, the domestication theory claims that whilst nation-states do consider global models already existing and effective in other countries' contexts as references, the theory does not agree that nation-states subsequently construct themselves as imitators or conformists. This is also my initial stance which led to the questions raised as a basis for this study.

Furthermore, the domestication theory refers to local processes in order to see what really occurs at this level when a global policy idea is introduced to local contexts. In contrast, other theories, such as world society theory, ignores domestic settings instead, focusing only on the impact of external factors such as world cultures. By focusing on local processes, the domestication theory is the most appropriate resource to assist in answering the puzzle of my research object to find out how the global policy idea, such as student mobility, is advocated in the local contexts of two countries, Finland and Vietnam. The domestication framework helps to reveal how political elites in their local contexts debate a new global idea and are able to convince the general public of the need to adopt it for the good of their own nations. In this way, the domestication framework is more suitable for my research.

In addition, the domestication framework through its process highlights the role local actors play in introducing, debating and consequently adopting a global policy idea in local contexts. In contrast, other theories emphasize the impact of external factors such as the world society theory with world

cultures and international organizations. Therefore again the domestication theory is in line with my research aim to demonstrate the role of local policymakers in the adoption of the global policy idea of student mobility specifically in Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts. In the lights of the above reasons, domestication framework is the most suitable theory that my research should lie on to proceed.

More specifically, I apply one part of the domestication theory to my study. In other words, I focus on a specific phase of domestication framework and that is the domestic political field battle. This phase particularly fits and makes sense of my research objective since it is at this stage in the process when political actors attempt to convince the audience of their interpretation and conclusions (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2013, p.12). That is the focus of my research and analysis. In particular, by applying the domestic field battle phase of the domestication theory to the Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts, my research can explore arguments made by these local policymakers to justify student mobility as part of their national higher education policy. These justifications are then examined to understand how they evolve to be seen as persuasive for the local audience and perceived to be best for the national interest.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data

To analyze how student mobility has been advocated at the Finnish and Vietnamese policymaking level, as my data I utilize Finnish and Vietnamese government documents relevant to student mobility. In particular, I use fourteen government documents of Finland and Vietnam in English and Vietnamese, that is seven documents from each country. The selected documents were issued either by the Finnish and Vietnamese Ministries of Education, The Research and Innovation Council of Finland or decisions, resolutions, programs issued by the two governments. These data were collected from the time period 2001 to 2016.

The data collected from Finland was taken out of documents from the Ministry of Education including An International Strategy for Higher Education 2001, Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015, Evaluation of the Academy of Finland 2013, and Education and Research: A development plan 2011–2016. Additionally, documents from The Research and Innovation Council of Finland were used including Research and Innovation Policy Guidelines for 2011–2015, Reformative Finland: Research and innovation policy review 2015–2020. Finally, a Programme of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen’s Government 2011 was utilized as a data source for the case of Finland.

For the case of Vietnam, the data set includes the Ministry of Education and Training’s documents, specifically the Strategy for Vietnamese Education Development 2001- 2010, Strategy for Vietnamese Education Development 2009-2010, Strategy for Vietnamese Education Development 2011-2020, and Directive: Fundamental Duties of Education in 2016-2017. In addition, decisions of Vietnamese government were referenced including Decision on International Integration in Education and Vocational Training by 2020, Resolution about Fundamental and Comprehensive Changes in Vietnam Higher Education 2006-2020. My final Vietnam reference is the Law on Higher Education 2012.

As stated earlier, the data derives from documents officially issued by these governments from the year 2001 to 2016, that is from the beginning of the 21st century until now, providing adequate data for analysis and discussion to enable my study as to how student mobility is invoked in national

higher education debate. As a clarification, I have chosen English written documents as data for the case of Finland, due to their ease of access and for the fact that my Finnish competency is rather limited leading to concerns that may affect the accuracy of language translation. Therefore, I decided to use English texts instead of Finnish texts for more convenience. In the case of Vietnam, I have chosen Vietnamese written documents as there were no English documents in relation to globalization of higher education available in Vietnam.

As to how my data was collected I first contacted the Ministries in both countries. For the Finnish data, I contacted the Ministry of Education and specifically asked for documents containing discussion on national higher education policies and student mobility. The Finnish Ministry of Education referred me to only one document, the most recent Strategy of Education Development in the period 2009-2015. In addition, the Finnish Ministry of Education introduced me another related agency, the Research and Innovation Council of Finland. For the Vietnamese data, I contacted the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and was given the Strategy for Vietnamese Education Development 2011-2020. The Vietnamese Ministry of Education also refereed me to other documents such as decisions, resolutions or programs regarding education of the government where student mobility may have been invoked.

Taking this advice from the Ministries of Education of both countries, I searched for related documents of the Research and Innovation Council of Finland and for decisions, resolutions or programs issued by the two governments. Other than that, given the sample text, the Strategies of Education Development in recent years recommended by the Ministries of Education of both countries, I also searched for similar documents in previous periods. From this mass of documentation I selected important documents based on their relevance to promoting student mobility and based on the time that they were issued. The oldest of these are from 2001 and the latest are from 2016. I am well aware that from this selection of data my research is unable to access all the discussions in which policy decision makers in Finland and Vietnam invoke student mobility. Yet, by collecting the policy texts relating to student mobility as detailed above, I am convinced I have a reasonable sample to analyze how governments in these two nation-state contexts debate the status of national higher education policies and the promotion of student mobility

My justification for collecting the data from the bodies selected is as follows. First, higher education in Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts is overseen by the governments, particularly it is regulated by the Ministry of Education. Hence, documents issued by the Ministry of Education in the two countries are especially relevant to finding answers to my research question

as they are domestically issued documents by the agency in charge of higher education. In this sense, they reveal domestic justifications of each of these nation-states as to why student mobility became a part of their national higher education policy.

Secondly, the Research and Innovation Council of Finland, chaired by the Prime Minister, is the body that gives advices to the Finnish Government and Ministries with regards to substantial matters regarding research and innovation. It also bears the responsibility of developing national strategies as well as coordinating Finnish science and technology policies and innovation system. Given its function, documents issued by this agency with their focus on the national innovation system are a relevant and interesting source for this study. They disclose arguments for advocating a global policy, such as student mobility, by understanding the government's stance of national strategic development and innovation. In other words, the documents of this body are particularly helpful for addressing the research puzzle in that they can reveal the arguments used to promote the origins of a global policy from a domestic viewpoint and for the purpose of domestic development. Moreover, decisions, resolutions and programs issued by both Finnish and Vietnamese governments are therefore significantly useful from the perspective of domestication.

Further to the above, the target audience of these documents from these agencies are local citizens in Finland and Vietnam. Consequently, justifications for adopting student mobility as part of national higher education policy disclosed by those documents are good indicators of how these global policies are presented to be plausible to the general public in the two nation-states contexts. In summary, by choosing the above government documents invoking student mobility as my source of data, I am able to study, how the government officials and local actors who share responsibility for national educational direction, advocate student mobility when they debate the current status in their countries and how improvements can be achieved with the adoption of student mobility.

3.2 Methodology

The methodological starting point of this research is to explore the ways in which student mobility has been justified in Finnish and Vietnamese contexts. In particular, I examine how members of the government debate student mobility in Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts. I focus on the distinctive justifications used in promoting student mobility. To analyze these justifications, in my analysis I draw on frameworks affected by the notion of discourse of Michel Foucault and the theory of rhetoric of Chaïm Perelman.

3.2.1 Discourse Analysis

Foucault's notion of discourse, as interpreted by Weedon (1987), refers to the ways of forming knowledge, social practices and power relations. According to Foucault (1972), perceptions about the world are created by certain people and social groups. These perceptions become unquestionable truths in certain circumstances. Foucault's notion of discourse believes that discourse produces knowledge and thus governs how to talk about a topic meaningfully and also affects how an idea is put into practice (Hall, 1997). Thus, this approach attempts to identify and know how the world is viewed by individuals or how the society is constructed by language.

Given its features, the discourse analytical method is appropriate for analyzing the empirical data in my study in that it helps to reveal how Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers in their language use provide meanings in relation to student mobility to the general public, leading to the acceptance of student mobility as part of Finnish and Vietnamese national higher education policies. By applying the discourse analytical approach, I can explore the way Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers interpret and formulate ideas regarding student mobility. Their interpretations, when locally accepted in Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts, have turned into unquestioned truths and affected decision making in regards to the local adoption of student mobility, a global policy idea, as part of their own national higher education.

3.2.2 Rhetorical Analysis

The discourse analytical approach applied here will be combined with rhetorical analysis. The term rhetoric refers to the art of effective communication (Halloran, 1982). The rhetorical analysis approach is not about the topic itself, rather it is about how the author presents the topic (Bazerman & Prior, 2003). In other words, the aim of rhetorical analysis is to understand how an author argues their arguments rather than what they argue. Through rhetorical analysis, one can pay attention to the characteristics of a text, that is, the context, the purpose for writing, the intended audience, and the types of evidence to reveal the strategies that an author uses to make their messages credible to their audience.

In this study, I am particularly interested in examining how Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers appeal to student mobility in discussion on the status of and problems faced in their individual nations, and on what premises their argumentation is based to make these arguments persuasive. Through unveiling the premises of the arguments, to some extent I am able to show the common values of Finnish and Vietnamese societies. For that purpose, I incline to Perelman's approach to

the theory of rhetoric with the focus on value which is specifically helpful for analyzing the empirical data in this study. He argues that value is central to the persuasiveness of arguments as the speaker always attempts to relate the audience to their society's value (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969). By applying the theory of rhetoric of Perelman, I can explore the means by which Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers refer to shared values among the public in order to construct and make their arguments plausible with the overall aim to persuade their citizens of the need to adopt the idea of student mobility as part of national higher education policies.

By combining discourse and rhetorical analyses, my study is able to examine how arguments are constructed to be persuasive, leading to a desired action. In applying the discourse and rhetorical analysis methods, the data was approached as follows. Initially, fourteen government documents of the two countries, Finland and Vietnam, were scanned to identify the rationalities/justifications local policymakers used to debate student mobility idea. After this, a draft coding sheet was created listing the various justifications found. Details can be seen in the Appendix: Coding Sheet containing the following information: Country, Document Name, Year issued, Justifications and Quotes of the Justifications. Following the identification process, these justifications were categorized into five main narratives. They are the narratives of competitiveness, functional needs, nation branding, cultural diversity and regional trend. Of these narratives, Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers shared two narratives, those of competitiveness and functional needs when justifying student mobility as national higher education policies. However, Finnish policymakers utilized more tools/narratives than their Vietnamese counterparts to convince their local audience regarding the necessity of student mobility. They utilized a further three narratives, those of national branding, cultural diversity, and regional trend in their effort to advocate student mobility.

3.3 “Legitimizing Narratives” as a Tool in Political Reassurance Work

As already identified the promotion of student mobility as part of national higher education policies has been justified on various grounds. Looking at all the rationales found, I have been able to identify five different categories of justifications for advocating the student mobility idea. I refer to them as legitimating narratives, the term was created by Syväterä and Alasuutari (2013) in their research on exploring the actual justifications in the political process by which the national bioethics committees model was enacted in Finland. They conceive such justifications as legitimating narratives in the sense that these narratives provide policymakers possible stories or imaginaries which are used to defend a proposed reform. When applied to my study, this term is

used to classify the plots policymakers have introduced to justify student mobility. By showing those justifications/legitimizing narratives, my research also reveals the basic premises the arguments are based on.

Of the five justifications identified, the first one can be called the narrative of *competitiveness in higher education*. Within it the idea of student mobility is presented as the result of competition with other nation-states. The second narrative is identified as the *functional needs* narrative. In this narrative student mobility is presented as a solution to various domestic needs. The third narrative is *nation branding* in which student mobility plays a significant role in strengthening the countries' visibility to the world. The fourth narrative is the *cultural diversity* narrative where student mobility is introduced as a means to increase understanding between cultures and societies which is argued to be crucial in the time of globalization. The last narrative is the *regional trend* narrative, relevant in particular to Finland as a member country of a regional organization which follows educational programs of the regional organization inclusive of student mobility with the aim to build a common higher education area in the region.

These five legitimating narratives are not always evident in the argumentation. Rather, they seem to be hidden premises that enhance and make the arguments appear rational in the political discourse (Syväterä & Alasuutari, 2013).

4. LEGITIMATING NARRATIVES IN ADVOCATING STUDENT MOBILITY IN NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES – THE CASE OF FINLAND AND VIETNAM

In the following subsections, I present the ways in which Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers legitimize the need to introduce student mobility into national higher education policies. Furthermore, within these legitimating narratives that local policymakers of these two countries have utilized I will discuss and explain the commonalities and differences.

4.1 Shared Narratives

My analysis revealed that there were two narratives that could be found both in the Finnish and Vietnamese data when the idea of student mobility was legitimized. In both countries, local policymakers compared the number of international students and the status of higher education of their own nations to others within the region and worldwide to indicate the need to adopt the student mobility idea. In the same manner, Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers emphasized the prominence of student mobility in matching their domestic needs. Policymakers in these two countries claimed that by adopting student mobility idea their internal human resource shortage and the need to attract foreign capital would be addressed.

4.1.1 The Narrative of Competitiveness

The case of domestication of global higher education policy, such as student mobility, in Finland and Vietnam has indicated the fact that the idea of competitiveness is brought into national policy-making. Both the Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers used competitiveness as an argument for promoting student mobility as part of higher education policies. To be more specific, they refer to the status of other countries' higher education as comparison to their own and thus highlight their own countries' inferiority which in turn necessitates the adoption of student mobility idea as a means to catch up with and even surpass others.

In the case of Finland, in The International Strategy for Higher Education in 2001, it is indicated that there was an increase in the number of foreign students in Finland over the past few years; however, this number is extremely low by international comparison. It is further explained that

Finland is classified internationally as a nation having a closed higher education system due to its modest number of foreign students. In this document, it is also made evident that Finland wants to compete with best performers in the area of education, claiming to weaken Japan and the United States' top ranks in research and innovation. Furthermore, other countries in Nordic region except for Iceland are claimed as competitors of Finland being seen to have a stronger international cooperation. Such claims are referred both in Finnish Ministry of Education's documents and the Program of Prime Minister:

“Our ranking in international competitiveness and development of information society comparisons has taken a downturn. The risk is that Finnish higher education institutions are losing their position as an interesting cooperation partner. Not only are we behind the large science nations in researcher, teacher and student mobility but we are also behind small developed countries.”

(Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015)

This statement describes the lower position of Finnish higher education in comparison with other countries particularly in research, teaching and student mobility. Another statement further indicates Finland's goal of being on top in these activities:

“On the international stage, Finland aims for the top in professional expertise, higher education, and research, development and innovation activities alike. Consequently, the recognition of prior learning and learning acquired abroad will be made part of all education.”

(Programme of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's Government 2011)

According to the rationale behind the statements quoted above, the desire of catching up and surpassing other nations' higher education creates the competitiveness. The promotion of a global higher policy, specifically student mobility, is argued to be a means to achieve this.

In this narrative, Finland's weaknesses identified as falling behind not only large nations but also small developed countries in student mobility and Finnish higher education institutions not being included in rapidly-growing educational markets are presented as key problems to which one of the solutions is seen to be adopting student mobility idea. It is argued that the mobility of scientists and experts, which in turn leads to innovation and safeguards the quality of Finnish institutions. That is the expansion of student mobility with the increase in the number of inbound and outbound students and consequent increase in knowledge is expected to improve both the quality of education and the

educational services. An increase in student mobility is also assumed to improve the existing Finnish level of internationalization as well as its ranking as an international competitor, ultimately leading to Finland catching up and even surpassing other competitors. Following this thought, it is suggested that by strongly investing in student mobility, Finland will be able to compete with other nations in terms of higher education quality and development.

In the case of Vietnam, local policymakers have had a similar approach also highlighting the inferiority of education in Vietnam:

“The quality of education is low compared to the development requirements of Vietnam in the new period and the level of countries with advanced education in the region and in the world ... International integration in education taking place on a global scale creates favorable opportunities to approach new trends, new knowledge, modern educational models and advantages of external resources. Therefore, quality of both students and teachers should be greatly focused and improved by sending them overseas for trainings by national budget and other sources of fund.”

(Vietnamese Education Development Strategy 2001-2010)¹

The claim here is that quality of education in Vietnam is lower in comparison with other countries in the region and worldwide, and in fact this gap between Vietnam and other countries is well behind the advanced levels achieved elsewhere. Adopting student mobility is therefore presented as a solution for Vietnam to improve its ranking among other nations. As student mobility involves sending students abroad and as well as receiving foreign students, it is expected to expose Vietnamese students to opportunities to gain new knowledge, to experience modern technologies and to more generally gain experience from leading countries in the world. As a consequence, this is supposed to contribute to reducing the gap between higher education in Vietnam and the world. This argument can be clearly seen in the latest directive issued by Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training for the academic year 2016-2017:

“Given the low quality of Vietnamese higher education system in comparison with other countries in the region and in the world, higher education institutions should take the initiative in expanding international cooperation, developing exchange programs for students with foreign universities as well as promote cooperation in scientific research, joint training, credit recognition, and the same degree with accredited foreign universities.”

(Directive: Fundamental Duties of Education in 2016-2017)

¹ All data excerpts from Vietnam data set are translated from Vietnamese by the author.

In addition to this, the resolution Fundamental and Comprehensive in Vietnam Higher Education period 2006-2020 also highlights the aim of Vietnam higher education as the following: to achieve a high level of competitiveness, to reach an advanced level in the region and to be approach a high level in the world. Using this logic, comparing and competing with other countries' higher education is used by Vietnamese policymakers as justifications for advocating the idea of student mobility in Vietnamese higher education policies.

4.1.2 The Narrative of Functional Needs

In the domestic higher education policy debate, the narrative of functional needs assumes two different forms. First, the narrative legitimates the student mobility idea by presenting it as a solution for human resource shortages in Finland and Vietnam. Second, the narrative points to the contribution of student mobility to foreign capital attraction.

Human Resource Shortage

In documents debating student mobility in both Finland and Vietnam, it is stated that there is a shortage in human resources. In this instance, Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers both presented a global higher education policy, more specifically student mobility, as a potential solution for this issue.

In the case of Finland, local policymakers take note of the availability of labor in Finnish market, indicating an ageing Finnish population causes a deficiency in the workforce in certain fields and the high employment rate long ago. It is anticipated that there will be a significant change in the structure of Finnish population in the near future given the rise of the elderly population, the modest numbers of youth and falling birth rates. In a similar vein, it is assumed that this trend in Finnish population together with the globalization of business will lead to a scenario where Finland is facing a shortage of local workers in all fields. Furthermore, most of areas are claimed to require highly skilled labors and are in need of additional employees. Finnish policymakers argue in the documents analyzed that the main objective of development is to boosting the mobility of well-educated people between organizations and sectors in Finland and internationally:

“The need to increase the international visibility and competitiveness of Finnish institutions of higher education is emerging in part from the existing shortage of labor in certain industries, which will worsen in some sectors. Attracting foreign students is one way to increase the availability of labor, because study in Finland teaches students about the country and binds them more to Finnish society and working life than other immigrants.”

Another example of shortage of workforce in Finland is found in the Evaluation of the Academy of Finland 2013. In this document, it is stated that Finland encounters more difficulties than other countries in Europe in developing partnerships and appealing to talents caused by Finland's outer location in the region. Hence, it is claimed that the research environments in Finland should be developed to become more appealing and that there is a need to broaden opportunities for foreign students and researchers to come to Finland where businesses are already benefiting from these people. As a consequence, the deficiency in labor, particularly skilled roles in Finland can be avoided through an active immigration program of recruiting international students. In the latest Research and Innovation 2015-2020, it is stressed that there should be a huge number of international students staying in Finland. Thus, it is argued that the integration into Finnish society from entry to employment should be well organized and include hospitality. Based on these evaluation, Finnish policymakers argue that promoting student mobility idea is a solution to tackle the shortage of labor in Finnish market since this idea is seen to help not only advancing the current domestic labor workforce but also in attracting foreign laborers to work in Finland.

The case in Vietnam is again slightly similar to that of Finland. However, instead of indicating the shortage of human resource due to an ageing population as Finnish policymakers do, Vietnamese policymakers emphasize the lack of a high quality labor workforce in Vietnam due to the rapid changes in economic development. It is claimed that as a developing country where a period of forty years of war has just ended, Vietnam is on its way to constructing and developing the nation to catch up with others in the region and in the world. Thus, in this period of industrialization, modernization and international integration, Vietnam is assumed to need more high quality human resources than ever to build a new generation of Vietnam and to meet the requirements of economic, technological and social development and the changes needs that come with this development. In this sense, education is seen to play a crucial role in preparing these human resources. Vietnamese policymakers argue therefore that promoting student mobility will assist in increasing intellectual levels, the training of skills for to meet human resources requirements and attracting talents, which in turn reflects the targets of the strategy of economic and social development. Following this train of thought, the Vietnamese Education Development Strategy 2011-2020 emphasizes that:

“One of the solution for enhancing national human resource is to increase the level of overseas trainings by national budget for key universities and national research institutes, especially prioritizing in the major of sciences and technology.”

(Education Development Strategy 2011-2020)

In addition, it is argued that other than the improvement of quality in the local labor workforce achieved by sending students abroad for training, bringing in foreign labor to work in the Vietnamese market is also beneficial for the development of the country. Consequently, apart from boosting the level of overseas training for the local workforce, Vietnamese policymakers are also focusing on encouraging foreigners to work in Vietnam. Taking this one step further, it is assumed that the most convenient way to achieve this outcome is to encourage foreign students to study in Vietnam and then have them stay on to work after graduation. This argument appears in the Decision on International Integration in Education and Vocational Training by 2020:

“Together with fostering local students abroad for trainings, at the same time attracting foreign students to study in Vietnam and take advantage of opportunities to attract resources to improve the scale and high quality human resource.”

(Decision on International Integration in Education and Vocational Training by 2020)

According to the premise behind these arguments above, the aim of developing national human resources, as relates to both quantity and quality, emphasizes the current status of human resource shortage. Local policymakers in both Finland and Vietnam support the student mobility idea assuming that with the establishment of student mobility, that is sending students abroad to other leading countries to learn and acquire knowledge, skills and experience, the quality of the local human resource market will improve. In addition, they believe that the promotion of student mobility idea, not only can local human resources be trained overseas and equipped with new knowledge and experience, but at the same time foreign students can be attracted to study in Finland and Vietnam. These students are then expected to stay on and work after graduation, contributing to both the quantity and quality of the workforce in these countries. In summary, both Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers indicate a weakness of their domestic human resource as a shortage of labor and consequently both have focused on the introduction of student mobility as a possible solution, that is the development of both quantity and quality of their human resources.

Foreign capital attraction

The attraction of foreign capital is another domestic need which local policymakers in both Finland and Vietnam have stated in documents debating student mobility. They claim that supporting student mobility increases international cooperation which in turn helps attract more foreign investments to their respective countries.

In the case of Finland, that the need for foreign capital in the Finnish market is stated in the document of the Research and Innovation Council of Finland:

“The volume of venture capital markets has developed weakly in Finland, and the proportion of funding from foreign investments is low.”

(Research and Innovation Policy Guidelines for 2011-2015)

According to local policymakers, Finland with its limited financial resources requires a substantial part of its needs to come from abroad. They go on to claim, the promotion of student mobility as a key to improve international cooperation for joint projects between Finland and other countries. While this international cooperation may initially be in the education sector such as research and training activities, it will gradually spread to other sectors as a result of foreign labor coming to Finland. Additionally it is argued that foreign investments for international cooperation in many fields will increase. This argument is similar in the case of Vietnam where Vietnamese policymakers link the benefits of international cooperation in higher education, specifically student mobility, to an increase in both overseas investments and the labor pool:

“International cooperation and trainings enhance foreign investments and labor recruitment.”

(Vietnamese Education Development Strategy 2009-2020)

The rationale behind this argument put forward by both countries' policymakers is an overall aim of economic development which in turn is the purpose behind attracting more foreign investments in addition to foreign labor. They claim that the contribution of the globalization of higher education, especially in relation to boosting student mobility, to national economic development is crucial to all business activities. In particular, it is argued that student mobility will lead to the attraction of highly educated labor force from overseas as well as an increase in foreign investments. Other than that, student mobility is assumed to help higher education institutions develop their international networks, which in turn strengthens the potentialities for development of the region by improving the regional business, competency and innovation. In summary, Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers both argue student mobility as a benefit for foreign capital attraction ultimately contributing to national economic growth.

4.2 Unique Narratives

Despite the commonalities above, Finnish policymakers appear to have more justifications than their Vietnamese counterparts when defending the argument that student mobility must be invested in national higher education policies and planning. Specifically, they utilize three additional justifications, not mentioned by Vietnamese policymakers. Firstly, Finnish policymakers argue that with the promotion of student mobility, Finland is able to build its reputation in the world. Secondly, they argue that student mobility is expected to increase understanding between cultures and societies which is crucial in the time of globalization. Thirdly, Finnish policymakers argue that boosting student mobility is necessary as it is a regional trend.

4.2.1 The Nation Branding Narrative

As stated in the justifications for student mobility, Finnish policymakers utilize the narrative of nation branding. This assumes two forms: the visibility of higher education institutions and educational exports. First, the narrative refers to student mobility as a tool to promote the global visibility of higher education institutions of Finland. Second, the nation branding narrative highlights usefulness of student mobility in exporting Finnish education.

Higher education institutions visibility

In most documents, local policymakers indicate the desire of Finland to strengthen the country brand, which means selling its positive image internationally. It is further emphasized that the visibility of higher education institutions plays an important role in this regard. In particular, it is stated in the Strategy for the internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland:

“Marketing and making the expertise of our higher education institutions more well-known are an essential part of the development of a national brand.”

(Strategy for internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland 2009-2015)

Given the role this visibility plays in building a strong country image for Finland, local political elites go on by indicating the contribution of foreign students to the enhancement of the visibility of Finnish higher education institutions:

“The higher education institutions, CIMO and the Academy of Finland will invest in developing the alumni activities of students, teachers and researchers with foreign backgrounds. Experts familiar with Finland will be utilized in increasing the visibility of Finnish higher education institutions.”

(Strategy for internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland 2009-2015)

Finnish policymakers consequently argue that by promoting student mobility as part of their national higher education policies, Finnish higher education institutions can be recommended to the world, which in turn enhances the global visibility of those institutions:

“This expansion of student mobility aimed, too, at improving the quality of education and range of educational services.”

(An international strategy for higher education 2001)

The argument of Finnish policymakers can be followed to a logical consequence. That is, in order to contribute to the goal of creating a strong country brand, it is assumed that Finnish higher education institutions have to be internationally well-known. One of the ways to effectively achieve this is by sending more Finnish people abroad and through attracting more foreigners to Finland resulting in Finnish higher education institutions will be introduced to the world based on the real experience of people. In this instance, student mobility is referred to as a tool to help higher education institutions in Finland sell their images. On the one hand, student mobility, both inbound and outbound, is argued to be useful in marketing Finnish higher education institutions to the world conducted. On the other hand, it is expected that by promoting student mobility, many aspects of higher education institutions such as education quality, international cooperation and the like are improved, resulting in a positive image of Finnish higher education institutions to then sell internationally.

Educational exports

Another form of nation branding narrative which Finnish policymakers use when justifying for student mobility is exporting education. It is claimed that the sale of educational services especially in higher education is a principal export in many countries. Besides, domestic supply is stated to be insufficient to meet the increasing demand of higher education in many emerging countries in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. Consequently, higher education and expertise are emphasized as important national exports:

“The aim is that the export of competence and education by higher education institutions becomes a nationally significant export product and part of Finnish export promotion. The export of competence can serve to support the overall internationalization of the higher education community, international networking and the visibility of Finland and Finnish higher education institutions abroad.”

(Strategy for internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland 2009-2015)

However, Finnish policymakers also state that Finnish higher education is still behind the rapid growth of education market. It is argued that promoting student mobility will help increase the higher education competencies for export. Through boosting student mobility, Finnish higher education institutions are assumed to improve opportunities to utilize their competencies, thus in turn contributing to the goal of exporting education. When the numbers of inbound and outbound students increase, it is expected that this increase reflects the high quality and good services of Finnish higher education institutions. It is to be noted that apart from traditional student mobility, there is the expectation that new activities be developed in Finnish higher education such as branch campuses, franchising, joint degrees, training agreements and corporate universities. All of these are seen as indicators of the high attractiveness of Finnish higher education institutions resulting in a strong export product to promote. Therefore, student mobility is argued to be a useful tool to enhance the export potential of Finnish higher education.

The visibility of higher education institutions and educational export are mentioned as aspects which contribute to enhance the positive image of Finland, so called “nation branding”. According to Szondi (2008), nation branding is the strategy of a nation to create a positive image and reputation for its nation. Each country has individual ways to build its own image. In the case of Finland, by emphasizing the visibility of higher education institutions and focusing on educational export, it seems that Finnish policymakers intend to establish a brand of Finland as a country with the highly attractive and quality higher education institutions. Based on what Finnish policymakers argue for this narrative, I argue that the premise behind this nation branding narrative draws heavily on a goal of economic growth. This can be seen throughout the arguments made by Finnish policymakers that the promotion of student mobility helps enhance the visibility of Finnish higher education and educational export, which in turn contributes to the positive image of Finland as a country offering excellent higher education institutions which are seen to be highly attractive worldwide. In this way, Finland is expected to attract not only foreign actors but also foreign funding. More specifically, as a country famed for outstanding higher education, foreign actors including students and expertise are assumed to travel to Finland for study and research, which then will provide the Finnish market with highly educated labor force. Furthermore, more foreign investments are anticipated to flow to Finland as a result of increasing international academic cooperation such as joint programs or bilateral trainings. It is argued that such investments are likely to spread gradually to other fields outside of the education area. These factors are claimed to be extremely beneficial for Finnish economic growth since they will contribute significantly to the labor workforce and capital for the Finnish economy.

4.2.2 The Narrative of Cultural Diversity

Multiculturalism is invoked as a rationale to support student mobility as part of Finnish higher education policies. Local policymakers argue that higher education institutions play an important role in building a multicultural society where different population groups have opportunities to interact and establish balanced relationships as well as experiencing equal living conditions. In particular, Finland's difficulty in attracting experts due to its peripheral location is pointed out as a reason to advocate student mobility. In this instance, it is argued that student mobility will result in the creation of diverse cultures within Finnish society. Furthermore, studying overseas is assumed to increase understanding regarding multiculturalism. Consequently, the promotion of student mobility is seen as a means to develop cultural diversity:

“Studying and working abroad increase understanding between cultures and societies ... Finland is in a relatively peripheral geographical location in Europe, which means that establishing partnerships through proximity and attracting talent to Finland face more practical hurdles than in many other locations in Europe. Thus actively supporting student mobility could stimulate a more international culture in the Finnish community.”

(Strategy for internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland 2009-2015)

In addition, it is stated in the Strategy for internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland that Finnish higher education institutions effectively prepare students with competencies so that they can perform well in a multicultural higher education community. Higher education institutions consequently advocate positive attitudes towards multiculturalism. This idea regarding equality between people from disparate cultures and backgrounds is also emphasized in the discussion:

“Realization of equality and development of attitudes are preconditions of multiculturalism. In higher education communities, this means that people working within them promote equality and equal opportunities to participate. People with immigrant backgrounds and foreign exchange and degree students, teachers, researchers and other foreign personnel of higher education institutions in Finland are an important resource in promoting internationalization at home. People with immigrant backgrounds should have equal opportunities for education as the rest of the population.”

(Strategy for internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland 2009-2015)

From the statements quoted above, it is seen that respect of equality in Finnish society is the basis of the argument. When equality is valued, people's race, gender, religion, age and sexual orientation are respected. As a consequence, different cultures and backgrounds are likely to be accepted and

appreciated in Finnish society. In other words, the consequence of valuing equality is an appreciation of multiculturalism in Finnish society. Student mobility as a global higher education policy idea is especially useful in increasing the understanding of multiculturalism and making Finnish society a multicultural one. Thus, the idea of cultural diversity is referred to as a justification for promoting student mobility as part of Finnish higher education policies.

4.2.3 The Regional Trend Narrative

Whilst there is no external power particularly in the region that is forcing Finland to adopt and promote student mobility, Finnish policymakers refer to the regional trend as a reason for the adoption of student mobility as an imperative. In the Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015, they invoke the EU and Nordic education programs to boost student mobility as a regional trend with which Finnish higher education should comply. It is of note that Finland even establishes an agency, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), to implement European educational programs. This center is claimed to conduct a wide range of programs to support higher education institutions in their international work including the promotion of mobility through national and international programs. In the discussion, the narrative of regional trend is related to harmonization in higher education area of EU and Nordic members. It is claimed that Finland as a member country follows European and Nordic educational programs with an overall aim to build a common European higher education area:

“Finnish higher education institutions adhere to European cooperation structures. Our higher education institutions are among the first to have implemented the reforms required by the Bologna Process, which aims at establishing a European higher education area. The higher education institutions participate actively in the Nordplus mobility programmes ... The Centre for International Mobility which is responsible for the national implementation of the EU educational programmes, has established itself as an internationally renowned and esteemed cooperation partner.”

(Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015)

A further example of harmonization in higher education in EU countries is mentioned in the international strategy for higher education in Finland 2001, which states that most member countries act in accordance with common regional education programs. In particular, Finland’s compliance with the EU educational program is indicated by the wide implementation of the Erasmus program which facilitates the exchange of students between European higher education institutions and supports cooperation and mobility between higher education and the world of work:

“Oriented by EU education programmes, Finland, like most other EU/EEA countries, invested particularly in increasing student and teacher exchange and in general building up international contacts and European networks ... Finland has participated actively in European higher education and research cooperation. The Erasmus programme has proved a great success for Finland ... The measures and priorities of EU educational policy are linked with efforts to enhance the efficiency of the internal market. To increase the mobility of labor, support for student mobility has been essential.”

(The International Strategy for higher education in Finland 2001)

According to the statements above, harmonization and duty of as a member country have led to Finland following the regional trend. It is seen that Finland considers itself as an active member when following educational requirements and structures directed by the European Union. Hence, adopting student mobility as a part of Finnish higher education policies is argued to be an exemplary action of an active member country. It is assumed that the adoption of student mobility will contribute to improving the regional higher education area. Based on this line of thought, ‘regional trend’ is utilized as a justification for adopting student mobility as part of Finnish higher education policies.

4.3 Explaining the Similarities and Differences in Legitimizing Narratives Used

As has been presented and discussed in this paper, there are a variety of justifications used by local policymakers in both Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts to advocate student mobility as part of national higher education policies. Of these, two are similar narratives. These are the narrative of competitiveness in higher education and the narrative of functional needs. However, Finnish policymakers use three further narratives to justify student mobility and these are the nation branding narrative, the narrative of cultural diversity and the regional trend narrative. The justifications or legitimating narratives used by Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers to defend student mobility idea as part of national higher education policies are especially relevant in that these debaters believe that their justifications will work in their local contexts. Should they not think those justifications would work, logically they would use other justifications or means to convince their citizens. Thus debaters are required to think about what is shared and accepted among their general audience in their local contexts in order to make use of this when debating and to ensure they can appear convincing speakers.

As regards the common legitimating narratives used by both Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers, that are competitiveness and functional needs narratives, premises behind them show that the desire to catch up as well as surpass other nations and the goal of economic development are widely shared in both nation-state contexts. It is the reason why local policymakers in both countries refer to the weaknesses of their national higher education systems and a shortage in human resource and foreign investments as starting points to describe the current status of their nations, which then enables them to promote the global policy idea of student mobility to enhance status as one solution.

In particular, in the case of the first narrative, the idea of catching up and surpassing other nations' higher education, is so shared in both Finnish and Vietnamese contexts since both countries favor education and consider it as primary contributor to national competitiveness. For Finland, it is said that education is one of the pillars in the society and Finns consider education as a key element in improving their competitiveness (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009). Similarly, the Vietnamese not only highly value education but also consider education as fundamental factor in achieving national economic and social development. Therefore, both local policymakers in Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts have made use of this nationwide accepted justification to present student mobility as a necessary global policy idea. It is in order to accomplish the desire of catching and surpassing other nation.

In a similar vein, the second narrative, the domestic needs justification, is also so accepted in both Finnish and Vietnamese contexts. More specifically, the domestic needs claimed by both Finnish and Vietnamese debaters are human resources and capital investments. These two elements are seen as key factors for productivity, which mainly drives growth and income levels (Cann, 2016). In this sense, it is more likely that the society will benefit from economic growth, which is the desire of every single citizen. Furthermore, according to a research of Schofer and Meyer (2005), it is pointed out that the wide spread of higher education can be seen as the success of national development, in which countries with highly educated people are able to build a great future by the expanded "human capital" to wisely manage the society. This finding of Schofer and Meyer (2005) concretely confirmed that higher education or university education is widely considered in countries worldwide as a source of social and economic development. Thus, it is easily comprehended why the general audience in both Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts share this belief regarding the importance of higher education in general and higher education policies in particular. Further, in this narrative it is clear to see a similar status of human resources in both Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts. Even though the exact status may differ, these two countries

suffer from the shortage of labor force. While Finnish market lacks workforce in terms of quantity due to aging population, Vietnam as an emerging country is faced with a scarcity of manpower in both quantity and quality. Hence, Finnish and Vietnamese debaters refer to this common issue as a convincing justification in order to promote student mobility. It is presented as a helpful tool to contribute significantly to more highly educated human resources and more capital investment, leading to social and economic development of the nation.

However as outlined in this paper, values in Finnish and Vietnamese societies are not always the same therefore legitimating narratives used in the Finnish nation-state context do not account as such in the Vietnamese context. Whilst there are shared values between nations, there also exist very different values. This is further strengthened by the survey of the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project in 2011, conducted in Britain, France, Germany, Spain and the U.S. According to the survey, America and Western Europe have disparate values in many important ways. Specifically, Americans are said to be more individualistic than British, French, Germans and Spaniards. In addition, Americans are claimed to be more conservative towards homosexuality as well as more religious than Western Europeans. Therefore, American policymakers and their Western Europeans counterparts would definitely use different explanations or justifications to convince their own people when advocating a new policy. It can be assumed, the same justifications will never work in both societies given their disparate values. The viral parody videos produced in many countries trolling President Trump's "America First" policy can be seen as a salient example of this point, emphasizing that indeed there are different values among nations.

In this study, Vietnamese policymakers have recognized that surely it would not be fruitful to debate student mobility in the same way that Finnish debaters have done. Thus, they build their arguments based on values which are shared and accepted by the Vietnamese audience and thus ensure they are more likely to convince their public regarding the need of student mobility as part of Vietnamese national higher education policies. Vietnamese policymakers in their justifications concentrate on only two of five narratives identified, competitiveness and functional needs, as most appropriate in the Vietnamese context to convince the general audience in Vietnam. These two narratives are in fact shared with their Finnish counterparts. Finnish policymakers however use further three legitimating narratives, those of nation branding, cultural diversity and regional trend to persuade their citizens regarding the need to adopt student mobility. Vietnamese counterparts do not refer to any of these three in their justifications.

Other than that, the difference in the way Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers debate student mobility as part of their national higher education policies also reflects the difference in the two

nations' political cultures, cultures here referring to commonly shared values and beliefs about the nature of political systems (Sinha, 2015). It is clear that political cultures are not identical across countries as can be seen in governments all over the world where some are organized as democracies and some as monarchies, as examples. Accordingly, Finnish and Vietnamese societies certainly have different values and beliefs as regards political power and legitimacy.

Given that political cultures definitely affect local political actors in the way they act such as in debating a policy, differences in political cultures consequently result in disparate ways of debating by these political actors. To be more specific, in this study Finnish policymakers utilized more justifications to debate student mobility than their Vietnamese counterparts. Perhaps this reflects that there are many values, which are equally shared in Finnish society. Hence, Finnish debaters are able to choose among those when building their arguments for advocating student mobility.

First is the use of the nation branding narrative which is about the visibility of Finnish higher education and educational exports. According to a survey conducted by the Finland 100 project secretariat at the Prime Minister's Office, education is among top three things that Finns are proud of. Thus it is significantly useful for Finnish debaters to utilize nation branding argument with focus on education as a plausible justification to convince their audience regarding the necessity of adopting student mobility as part of their national higher education policies.

Second, the reference to cultural diversity highlights the value of equality in Finnish society. The fact is multiculturalism in addition to equal opportunity to study for people of varying cultures are valued in the Finnish community. This is even written in the website of the Finnish National Agency for Education that Finnish people are proud of their education system which provides equal education for all regardless of culture, religion, gender and socio-economic situation. Given this shared value, Finnish policymakers made use of it to produce a convincing argument to defend student mobility thereby increasing the understanding of multiculturalism and making Finnish society a multicultural one.

Lastly, Finnish policymakers used the regional trend narrative whereby Finland follows the rules, trends and programs initiated by the organizations of which Finland is a member. Finland has a strong belief in rule-based EU. This is clearly shown in the statement of Teija Tiilikainen, Director for the Finnish Institute of International Affairs in an interview with EURACTIV- a pan-European media network that: "For the Finns it's important that what has been agreed, is something which everybody respects ... It's very important that we stick to the rules and regulations that we have set amongst ourselves inside the EU." (H. Jacobsen, personal communication, Feb 24, 2014). Thus,

Finnish debaters have used this shared value within Finnish society, that of the compliance of membership, when building their argument to promote student mobility as part of their national higher education.

5. DISCUSSION

In this research, I set out to explore how student mobility becomes part of national higher education policies. To answer that question, I reviewed how student mobility has been advocated as a policy objective in Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts. In my analysis, I focused on the government documents. I asked: How is student mobility advocated in Finnish and Vietnamese higher education policy debates? What are the different justifications used when actors promote student mobility as domestic higher education policy objective? These questions are interesting as answers to them somewhat explain how two different countries, Finland and Vietnam, end up implementing the same policy objective i.e. student mobility. In addition, answers to these questions clarify the way in which a global policy idea is promoted and gradually adopted at a nation-state level. To be more specific, they reveal the diverse justifications utilized by local actors in supporting their decision. On top of that, these findings highlight the critical role of local actors throughout the process in which a global policy idea is domesticated.

At first, the case seems to fit into the realm of world society theory where nation-states conform to global trends or models due to world culture (Meyer, 2009). However, the world society theory does not go into the national level to explore how a global policy idea permeates national spheres. Instead, this theory claims national actors ritually enact global policy ideas. On the other hand, the domestication theory, which considers the global policy adoption from local viewpoint or at the national level, appears to provide concrete answers to the posed questions. In other words, the domestication framework helps reveal how political elites in their local contexts debate and convince the general audience regarding the need of adopting a global policy idea for the good of their own nation. Moreover, the domestication framework through its process highlights the role domestic actors play in introducing, debating and consequently adopting a global policy idea in local contexts. Thus, the domestication theory is better aligned with my study in that it helps answer the aim of the study, that is how a global policy idea such as student mobility is invoked in the Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts. Specifically, the case of Finland and Vietnam was studied from the perspective of domestication theory by examining government documents of the two countries in question with a focus on finding out how the global policy idea of student mobility was advocated as part of national higher education policy by domestic policymakers within local contexts.

The empirical analysis explored various narratives used to justify the advocate of student mobility as part of national higher education policies in Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts. These narratives are: the competitiveness narrative, the functional narrative, the nation branding narrative, the cultural diversity narrative and the regional trend narrative. Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers share the first two narratives of the competitiveness and the functional narratives. To defend student mobility they compared the status of higher education of their own nations to others within the region and worldwide which indicated their weaknesses and therefore the need to adopt student mobility as part of their national higher education policies. Similarly, local policymakers in both countries emphasized the suitability of student mobility to match their domestic needs, claiming that by adopting the student mobility idea their individual country's domestic human resource shortage would be alleviated and foreign capital would be attracted.

The empirical analysis also revealed that in Vietnamese context, the values in relation to competitiveness and function are dominant in the discussion of student mobility. Thus, Vietnamese debaters adjust their arguments to these values in order to make their arguments appealing and convincing. Meanwhile, as regards higher education and student mobility in Finnish society, there are many equally shared values, which Finnish debaters were able to choose from to add credibility to their arguments. In greater detail, Finnish debaters further utilize the narrative of nation branding where they argue that with the promotion of student mobility, Finland is able to improve higher education visibility and educational export, contributing to improving Finland's reputation to the world. Additionally, the argument of Finnish political elites is that student mobility is a helpful tool to increase understanding between cultures and societies. Furthermore, they promote the adoption of student mobility as an active member country of regional organizations. Given the justifications identified and analyzed, it can indeed be said that mere imitation of other nation-states was insufficient to justify the adoption of the global policy idea of student mobility, which would have contributed to isomorphism. Rather, from this research it is evident that nation-states clearly build their own rationales to promote and to defend their decisions in regard to national policy making.

However, these justifications would neither be plausible nor work in the way local policymakers proposed if they were not constructed based on the widely accepted values in their local societies. Values utilized by Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers are honored and shared in each individual country and are thus useful and essential for debaters to make their argument and convince their local populations. In other words, when the adoption of a new policy idea is required, debaters always rely on the widely shared values in their contexts in order to make their arguments persuasive.

On the basis of the analysis, there are two outstanding assumptions of political argumentation used by both Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers. First, the notion of competition is the dominant concept by which one nation is related to other nations. This notion provides explanation of why countries should adopt new policy ideas to keep up with the competition. In this study, this underlying assumption is evident, for instance, in the way in which student mobility is adopted in Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts with the aim to shorten the gap between them and other countries and even to surpass others as regards higher education.

Second, in the domestic political discussion, debaters justify their arguments based on what is the best for their nations, more specifically, the nation is constructed as a community with the shared interest of maintaining and increasing the wellbeing of the society. This assumption can be clearly seen in most of the narratives analyzed. As an example, student mobility is introduced as a solution to solve domestic problems such as a human resource shortage and a requirement for foreign capital, both of which are key components for national economic development. Moreover, Finnish policymakers also present student mobility as a tool to improve Finnish higher education visibility and educational export, thereby contributing to the positive image of Finland as a country having excellent higher education institutions and therefore highly attractive to the rest of the world.

In addition, it is noted from the analysis that while political elites attempt to make use of commonly shared values when demanding the adoption of a new policy, there are indeed different shared values across countries. It is surmised that this may be caused by the differences in political cultures among nations. These differences result in disparate ways in which local debaters utilize their arguments to defend a new policy. Hence, Vietnamese policymakers do not apply the same arguments as Finnish policymakers do in the Finnish nation-state context in Vietnamese context since they will not work effectively. In particular, in this research the values utilized by Vietnamese policymakers are dominant in the discussion of student mobility in Vietnamese context. Thus, in order to make the arguments convincing, Vietnamese debaters adjust their arguments to these values. Meanwhile, there are many equally shared values in respect of student mobility in Finnish society, from which Finnish debaters are able to choose to add plausibility to their arguments.

All in all, in the case of Finland and Vietnam, considering the way local policymakers construct legitimating narratives to promote the global policy idea of student mobility as part of national higher education policy, it can be seen that the rationale for isomorphism is complex. That is nation-states are not just merely imitators of each other. It is clear that they must build their own convincing arguments in any decision relating to national policy making. In addition, the way in which legitimating narratives are built also reflects how a global policy idea is interpreted locally

and consequently becomes domesticated. In summary, whilst a global policy idea, in this case student mobility, has not originated in these two countries in question, it disperses through these nations and gradually develops into domestic matter.

Given the diverse justifications identified in the way policymakers in Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts defend a global policy idea, it is evident that countries build their justifications to legitimate their decisions towards new policies based on different values shared in their nations. It can therefore be generalized that countries worldwide will display a variety of shared values within their local contexts and will therefore also have distinct justifications for their decisions in relation to the adoption of new policies. However this assumption would be more accurate if there were more countries to be studied. In particular, studying countries which have many things in common may produce interesting findings. This is a suggestion as to what future research may fulfill. Furthermore, there are a variety of other sources discussing the adoption of new policy ideas within nations. This study has examined written governmental documents only. Thus, future research, to approach and analyze this topic which takes in other sources of data such as the media and the press may discover new findings. Additionally, applying a different method of collecting data such as interviewing political elites may also introduce more useful information to the research. Finally, this study has scrutinized the domestication of a policy model in the area of education only. Future studies focusing on policies in other fields such as environment, health care, and economy will further complement the domestication theory.

6. CONCLUSION

In summary, the thesis has attempted to answer the question of how the global policy idea, such as student mobility, has been advocated and become part of national higher education policies in both Finnish and Vietnamese nation-state contexts. It has identified a variety of legitimating narratives used by the local policymakers in these two countries when promoting student mobility. While Finnish and Vietnamese policymakers share some justifications, they differ in others. Interestingly, they are both build their justifications based on different values shared in their local societies.

When linking the findings of my research to the theoretical perspective, they give credence to the domestication theory in explaining how a global policy model becomes domesticated. The world society theory which is the dominant theory in diffusion literature on global higher education policies struggles and fails to explain how and by which mechanism a global higher education policy is adopted in local contexts. While world culture of world society theory provides an adequate explanation for the dispersal of global higher education policies leading to isomorphism, this theory is unable to describe how that process occurs at national level. Yet, the national context is the setting where global higher education policies are actually adopted and implemented. The dominant world society theory considers the adoption of global policy models merely as ritual enactment and considers nation-states as unthinking conformists. It does not take into account the role of local actors in the adoption of global higher education policies. These flaws within the world society theory call for a different approach and that is to examine the adoption of global higher education policies from the local viewpoint. That is the approach I have undertaken in my study, that is taking the domestication theory perspective to contribute to the current discussion on global higher education policy diffusion.

To be more specific, this study has complemented the domestication theory of national policy making particularly in the field of higher education. While focusing on one process of domestication framework only, that is the domestic political debate, this study shows how the global policy idea, specifically student mobility, is interpreted locally and consequently becomes domesticated as part of national higher education policy and discourse. To some extent, the findings of the study can be generalized to include most global higher education policies that have been adopted to nation-state contexts. Through the study, it is clearly seen that whilst the global education policy idea, such as student mobility, does not originated from the two countries in

question, it disperses through the nations by means of justifications directly linked to national interests and so the global policy idea gradually develops into a domestic matter. In addition, the outcomes of the study reveal that the local policymakers of the two countries in question, Finland and Vietnam, make use of justifications which are widely shared and accepted within their local societies in order to advocate student mobility as part of their national higher education policy. This supports the domestication theory viewpoint that countries do not construct themselves as imitators. Rather, local policy actors in the domestication process take on the responsibility to build their own relevant justifications for the adoption of global policy models and therefore that they cannot be seen to merely imitate what other countries have done.

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APPENDIX: CODING SHEET

Country	Document names	Year issued	Competitiveness	Quote (Competitiveness)	Functional needs				Nation branding				Cultural diversity	Quote (Cultural diversity)	Regional trend	Quote (Regional trend)
					Human resource shortage	Quote (Human Resource shortage)	Foreign capital attraction	Quote (Foreign capital attraction)	Higher education institutions visibility	Quote (Higher education institutions visibility)	Educational export	Quote (Educational export)				
Finland	An international strategy for higher education	2001	1	The aim is that Finnish universities can compete on an equal footing with the best modern universities and other institutions of higher education in the world. The expansion of student mobility aimed, too, at improving the quality of education and range of educational services.	1	- The need to increase the international visibility and competitiveness of Finnish institutions of higher education is emerging in part from the existing shortage of labor in certain industries, which will worsen in some sectors. Attracting foreign students is one way to increase the availability of labor, because study in Finland teaches students about the country and binds them more to Finnish society and working life than other immigrants. - ...recruitment of foreign students as part of an active immigration policy would help prevent a shortage of labor in general and of skilled labor in particular.	0		1	This expansion of student mobility aimed, too, at improving the quality of education and range of educational services			0		1	- Oriented by EU education programmes, Finland, like most other EU/EEA countries, invested particularly in increasing student and teacher exchange and in general building up international contacts and European networks. - Finland has participated actively in European higher education and research cooperation. The Erasmus programme has proved a great success for Finland. - The measures and priorities of EU educational policy are linked with efforts to enhance the efficiency of the internal market. To increase the mobility of labour, support for student mobility has been essential
Finland	Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009-2015	2009	1	Despite our progress, the low level of internationalization is still one of the key weaknesses of the Finnish higher education and research system when compared with our competitors. Finland has built its competence base and success very much with its own means. When compared with the speed of change in the operating environment and the development of globalization, Finland's internationalization development has been slow, and has completely stopped in some fields. Our ranking in international competitiveness and development of information society comparisons has taken a downturn. The risk is that Finnish higher education institutions are losing their position as an interesting cooperation partner. Not only are we behind the large science nations in research, teacher and student mobility but we are also behind small developed countries	1	Higher education institutions are key to the internationalization of the economy and society. They attract a highly educated labor force.	0		1	- Marketing and making the expertise of our higher education institutions more well known are an essential part of the development of a national brand. - The higher education institutions, CIMO and the Academy of Finland will invest in developing the alumni activities of students, teachers and researchers with foreign backgrounds. Experts familiar with Finland will be utilized in increasing the visibility of Finnish higher education institutions. - Public and private organizations already operating abroad offer international cooperation opportunities in increasing the visibility of higher education institutions	1	- The aim is that the export of competence and education by higher education institutions becomes a nationally significant export product and part of Finnish export promotion. The export of competence can serve to support the overall internationalization of the higher education community, international networking and the visibility of Finland and Finnish higher education institutions abroad. The export of competence and the development of new forms of educational cooperation mean that the perspectives of the student and of the consumer in the activities of the higher education institutions are better acknowledged. - Our higher education institutions have been left out of fast-growing educational markets. The export and professional marketing of competence are still in their infancy - Demand for higher education is growing rapidly in developing countries where domestic supply cannot meet demand. The sale of educational services has become an important export product for many countries. New activities should be sprung up alongside traditional student and researcher mobility, such as branch campuses, franchising, made-to-order education, bilateral training agreements, twinning, joint degrees, e-learning and corporate universities.	1	- Studying and working abroad increase understanding between cultures and societies. - Finland is in a relatively peripheral geographical location in Europe, which means that establishing partnerships through proximity and attracting talent to Finland face more practical hurdles than in many other locations in Europe. Thus actively supporting student mobility could stimulate a more international culture in the Finnish community. - Realization of equality and development of attitudes are preconditions of multiculturalism. In higher education communities, this means that people working within them promote equality and equal opportunities to participate. People with immigrant backgrounds and foreign exchange and degree students, teachers, researchers and other foreign personnel of higher education institutions in Finland are an important resource in promoting internationalization at home. People with immigrant backgrounds should have equal opportunities for education as the rest of the population	1	Finland higher education institutions adhere to European cooperation structures. Our higher education institutions are among the first to have implemented the reforms required by the Bologna Process, which aims at establishing a European higher education area. The higher education institutions participate actively in the Nordplus mobility programmes... The Centre for International Mobility which is responsible for the national implementation of the EU educational programmes, has established itself as an internationally renowned and esteemed cooperation partner
Finland	Programme of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's Government	2011	1	On the international stage, Finland aims for the top in professional expertise, higher education, and research, development and innovation activities alike. Consequently, the recognition of prior learning and learning acquired abroad will be made part of all education	0		0		0		0		0		0	

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Finland	Education and Research 2011-2016	2011	0		0	In Finland, there is a shortage of labor in certain sectors and high structural unemployment dating from the past. In addition, work and jobs have been lost in the global recession. The key development target is improving mobility of highly educated people between (research) organizations and sectors in Finland and internationally	0		0		0		0		0	
Finland	Research and Innovation 2011-2015	2011	0		1	In order to strengthen intellectual capital and meet educational needs, education must be made international in scope, and the quality of education improved. The key is internationalization based on the high level of education and research, the attractiveness of a research career, increased mobility and more active participation in international organizations	1	The volume of venture capital markets has developed weakly in Finland, and the proportion of funding from foreign investments is low. In order to obtain foreign intellectual capital and investments, the attractiveness of Finland should be increased in international cooperation. Increase mobility and cooperation in research and innovation helps highlight Finland as an investment target.	0		1	The Government issued a resolution in spring 2010 on the strategic policy guidelines for exporting education. The aim is that the share of education of Finland's total exports should grow considerably by the year 2015. Trade in education is a globally growing market that offers a great many opportunities for Finland. The main export product around the world is higher education leading to a degree. The recruitment practices of education, research and innovation organisations will be made more transparent to attract international students, researchers and experts.	0		0	
Finland	Evaluation of the Academy of Finland	2013	0		1	- Finland is in a relatively peripheral geographical location in Europe, which means that establishing partnerships through proximity and attracting talent to Finland face more practical hurdles than in many other locations in Europe. - Yet another aim is to develop the research environments to be more attractive and increase the chances of foreign researchers to work in Finland	0		0		0		0		0	
Finland	Research and innovation 2015- 2020	2014	1	Finland has to raise the level of education faster than in its competitors	1	Mobility of scientists and experts, international contacts and scientific co-publications, and exploitation of knowledge produced abroad have a high correlation with innovativeness. To safeguard the quality of Finnish research and innovation, the mobility of experts nationally, internationally and between sectors must be encouraged. A larger share of foreign students and scientists should stay in Finland: entry to the country, employment services and other measures that support integration in the Finnish system must be coordinated and welcoming. Recruitments based on open international calls will ensure a high standard of personnel competence.	0		1	- Universities need to have globally visible profiles. - Finland must be internationally attractive	0		0		0	

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Vietnam	Vietnamese Education Development Strategy 2001-2010	2001	1	The quality of education is low compared to the development requirements of Vietnam in the new period and the level of countries with advanced education in the region and in the world... International integration in education taking place on a global scale creates favorable opportunities to approach new trends, new knowledge, modern educational models and advantages of external resources. Therefore, quality of both students and teachers should be greatly focused and improved by sending them overseas for trainings by national budget and other sources of fund	0		0		0		0		0		0	
Vietnam	Resolution: Fundamental and Comprehensive in Vietnam Higher Education period 2006-2020	2005	1	By 2020, Vietnam Higher Education will have high competitive ability, reaching an advanced level in the region and approaching a high level in the world.	0		0		0		0		0		0	
Vietnam	Vietnamese Education Development Strategy 2009- 2020	2008	0		0		1	International cooperation and trainings enhance foreign investments and labor recruitment	0		0		0		0	
Vietnam	Vietnamese Education Development Strategy 2011-2020	2011	0		1	One of the solution for enhancing national human resource is to increase the level of overseas trainings by national budget for key universities and national research institutes, especially prioritizing in the major of sciences and technology	0		0		0		0		0	
Vietnam	Law on Higher Education	2012	0		1	Creating conditions for higher education institutions to train high quality human resource in order to meet the requirements of the industrialization and modernization of the country by expanding international cooperation such as developing exchange programs for students with foreign universities, promoting cooperation in scientific research and joint training.	0		0		0		0		0	
Vietnam	Decision on International Integration in Education and Vocational Training by 2020	2013	0		1	Together with fostering local students abroad for trainings, at the same time attracting foreign students to study in Vietnam and take advantage of opportunities to attract resources to improve the scale and high quality human resource	0		0		0		0		0	
Vietnam	Directive: fundamental duties of Education in 2016-2017	2016	1	Given the low quality of Vietnamese higher education system in comparison with other countries in the region and in the world, higher education institutions should take the initiative in expanding international cooperation, developing exchange programs for students with foreign universities as well as promote cooperation in scientific research, joint training, credit recognition, and the same degree with accredited foreign universities.	0		0		0		0		0		0	